

Open Letter to Church Board

Date: May 12, 2014

To: Church Board:

Jimmye Saldivar, Chairman
Don Whitley, Secretary
Barb Scantlin, Elder Chair

Katie Spencer, V. Chair
Dorene Drake, Treasurer
Pat Whitley, Deacons

Oaks Christian Church
1216 Bethlehem St
Houston, Texas 77018-1918

From: Charlie Dean, church member

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The viability of OCC depends on young adults. If OCC is going to be a magnet for young adults, we must have better song-music for the congregation and visitors to sing. Most young adults are not attracted to song-music that lacks a fun rhythm and beat. When they are made mind-numbingly bored, I can understand them politely walking away and not returning.

Each piece of music on Sunday morning either attracts more than it repels, or it repels more than it attracts. And in the backdrop, attrition works against us constantly.

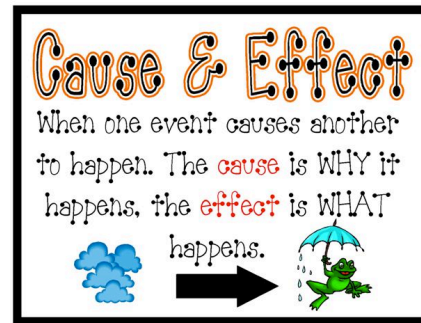
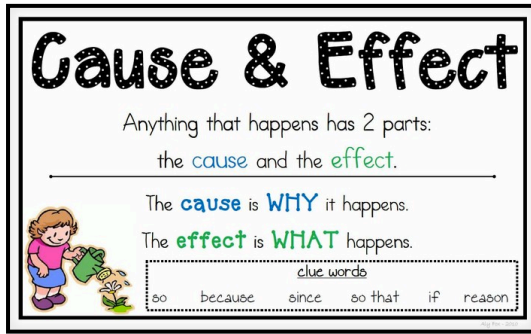
The music that the choir and musicians present has improved significantly with our new music director. The congregation's performance remains limited by the **two songbooks**. Our two songbooks fail to provide spirited, energizing, and motivating music. Music is the most in-your-face aspect of a church. A visitor cannot get away from it; it is bold, provocative, and blatant. It is the most difficult part of a church program to daydream or sleep through.

People's opinion of a church is more impacted by the music than any other attribute of the church, except perhaps the theological doctrine. I am not asking the Board to compromise theology. I do request that the Board review the purpose of OCC and consider using better music to accomplish it.

There is no telling how many young adults have visited OCC, and were **repelled by the music**, notwithstanding OCC's good attributes. OCC has new lighting, projector and screen. It has a/c, fellowship hall, kitchen, WiFi, extra space, and a good location. We are renovating parts of the building. OCC has other positive attributes. Through the process of elimination the Board ought to be able to figure out where the most repulsive aspect is.

Cause and effect: Think of music as the independent variable, the variable that is varied or manipulated. The attendance is the dependent variable, responding to the music. The independent variable is the cause, whereas the dependent variable is the effect. There is a positive correlation between the music and the attendance. As the music improves, so does the attendance; when the music is poor, the attendance drops. **This occurs slowly over time.**

The membership problem is not happenstance, or a chance occurrence. It did not happen suddenly or without an apparent cause. The problem goes back at least a dozen years. Today's situation could well have been predicted years ago. Nevertheless, *cause and effect* is a difficult concept for the Board to get a grip on. Please see the **Polka Dot Lesson Plans** beginning on page 5.



If there is to be a significant improvement in OCC's attendance, the Board must make it happen. It is not reasonable to wait for some external supernatural stimulus, **while everyone simply waits**. By the way, some fun song-music would be good for the older folks too.

On Sunday, May 11, 2014 our new music director was absent and it showed. Laud have mercy! It was a step backward in time. The duet by the two nice ladies was fine, however. After finally being relieved of the last musical regime, and what seemed like the turning over of a new musical leaf, the situation reverted.

As I review the minutes from January 8, 2012 onward, it appears that the Board has failed to establish any mechanism to improve the music. After over a dozen years of complaints about the "music problem," on September 15, 2013 a committee was appointed to explore the music problem. The committee has developed **no mechanism to improve the music**. This was made clear on Sunday, May 11, 2014. Just appointing a group of people to look into something is not enough.

Individual church members are not just **commodities to be exploited**. It is as though the time, labor, and money of individual members has value, but not their personhood. **I can assure you, Young Adults (19 – 30) notice this.**

I urge the Board to consider delineating more clearly between a leader's personal whims and the purpose of OCC. The Bell Choir comes to mind. Clearly some leaders are infatuated with the Bell Choir. The Bell Choir is useless for attracting young adults. My hunch is that the infatuation of a few has negatively impacted OCC's membership for years. The general congregation has no choice but to rely on the Board as its management team. **I do not care exactly how the Board fulfills its duty, but I do care when the Board fails to accomplish it.**

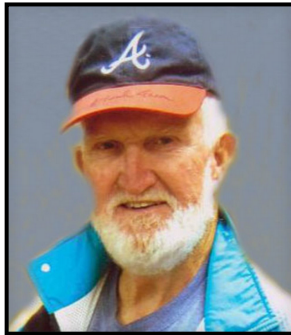
I am perplexed why the Board is so adamant about maintaining the status quo, and perpetuating the attendance and membership problem by perpetuating the music problem. It seems to defy any fiduciary responsibility to the corporation, and a duty to fulfill the purpose of OCC, and a responsibility to the general congregation. **The Board provides no explanation for this.** I have looked for an explanation and authority elsewhere and found none. However, there is another church in Houston that is also having a similar membership problem. An editor of **Redneck Houston Gazette** had a recent interview with a church leader. That situation might be instructive in our present predicament. The interview follows on the next page.

I believe we have good, dedicated people for leaders. When the Board, year after year, continues to be uninitiated, the flaw must be with the system. **We must work together to improve the system.**

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Redneck Houston Gazette

Recent Interview With Officer Of Church Board



Crusty Crumble
Hardcore Zenith Church



Rusty Alloy
Redneck Houston Gazette

Rusty: Hello there Crusty ol' kid.

Crusty: Hey boy. What are we gonna talk about today.

Rusty: I've been interviewing folks about the makeup of their church boards.

Crusty: That's one of my favorite topics. We have eminent, excellent and godly scholars. Noble men of great excellence, virtue and religion, whom are always smiled upon by our brethren. No wrong laid upon their account. Men of humility ...

Rusty: Hey, Crusty. I hear you're a muzishiun, and in the bell choir at your church.

Crusty: Yep. I do a lot of ding a-dong a-dingin'.

Rusty: What kind of musical instruments do y'all use.

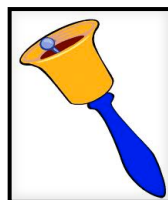
Crusty: We use ding-a-lings. We've got a bunch of 'em.

Rusty: Sounds complicated. Is it like juggling.

Crusty: Not exactly. Most good muzishiuns play two ding-a-lings at a time. I'm not as coordinated so I only play one. It's my prodigal ding a-ling.

Rusty: So how do you play a ding a-ling?

Crusty: I grab a-holt-a my ding-a-ling with both hands, and I go to ding a-dong a-dingin' on it.



Rusty: Do you think your antics will attract any new members? Especially young adults?

Crusty: No. I don't care if them youngsters come or not. I'm havin' too much fun a-ding a-dong a-dingin' on my ding-a-ling.

Rusty: Is it difficult knowing that your antics just might be an adverse affect on membership?

Crusty: No. To tell you the truth, it's easy. Let me explain. We use a language denying choice. We say *should, one must, have to*. We call it *officetalk*. In *officetalk* you deny responsibility for your actions by avoiding the results of your actions. So if anybody says, *Why did you do that?* we say, *We needed to*. Or, *Why did you need to? That's our policy, or that's how we've always done it*.

Rusty: How will you fellers ever solve your budgetary woes ifn you don't get some new members to get money out of?

Crusty: I recon the other church members will have to step up the givin'.

Rusty: The others? Are you not included?

Crusty: Naw. I'm tighter than bark on a tree.

Rusty: Tell me I'm not surprised.

Crusty: Good visit Rusty. Got to go. See ya.

Rusty: You seem to be in a hurry.

Crusty: Yep. I gotta go grab a-holt-a my ding-a-ling. I gotta practice my ding a-dong a-dingin'.

Rusty: Bye.



A young adult who visited
Hardcore Zenith Church
for the *first and last time*.

Polka Dot Lesson Plans: Adventures Of A 4th Grade Teacher

Redaction from <http://polkadotlessonplans.blogspot.com/2013/10/cause-and-effect-pin-it-to-win-it-and.html>



Sunday, October 13, 2013

Cause and Effect, Pin It to Win It, and a Sale

Truth time: I hated disliked teaching cause and effect up until this past week.

Why? Because it is a confusing concept and when I have 20 children yelling out, "Cause, no effect, no cause, effect," I no longer even know the answers to the questions! I'm just keepin' it real here.

I've always taught my students that it is easier to find the effect, or what happened, first and then think about why it happened. This worked okay, but was still a little confusing for me the kids. I was determined to come up with a better way to teach this!

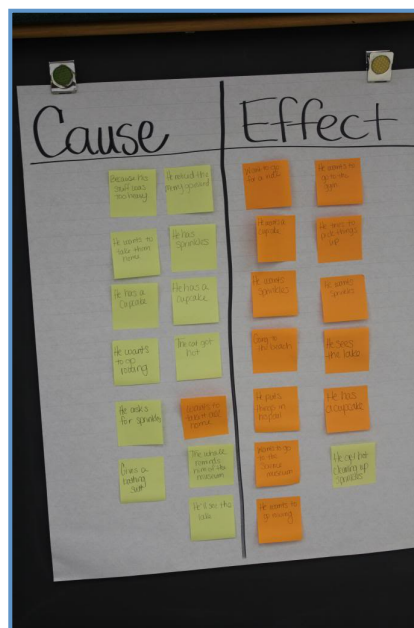
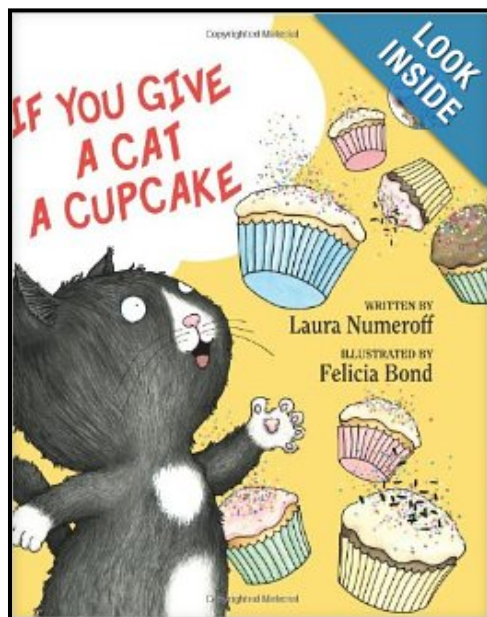
The breakthrough came on Wednesday while we were working in our interactive notebooks. I decided to take a different approach and, instead of asking what happened, we started by asking, "What caused something to happen?" It was truly a breakthrough and the answer to one of the greatest mysteries in all my teaching career!! LOL It was such an easier way to do things.

I guess I'd just never really thought about how to formulate the question so that the kiddos could find the cause first. Where have I been!?! Teaching in a cave, apparently!

Things went much better after we made this little discovery and the kiddos agreed that it was much less confusing and easier to identify the cause and effect this way.

Now that we've gotten through my little "moment" and how I explain things to my kiddos, I thought I'd share some of the activities we did during our lessons this week.

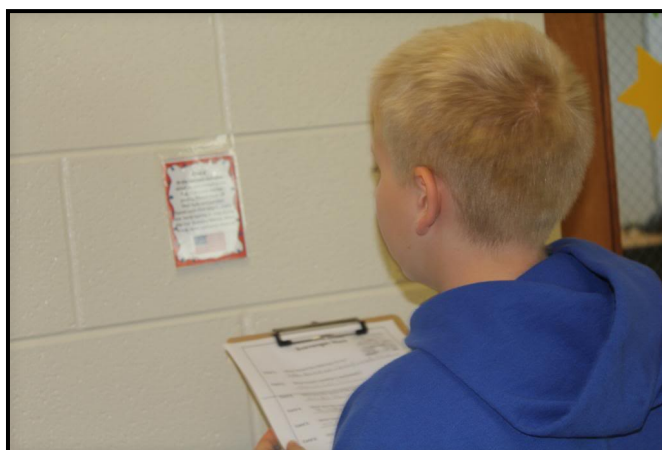
We read this book and created an anchor chart.



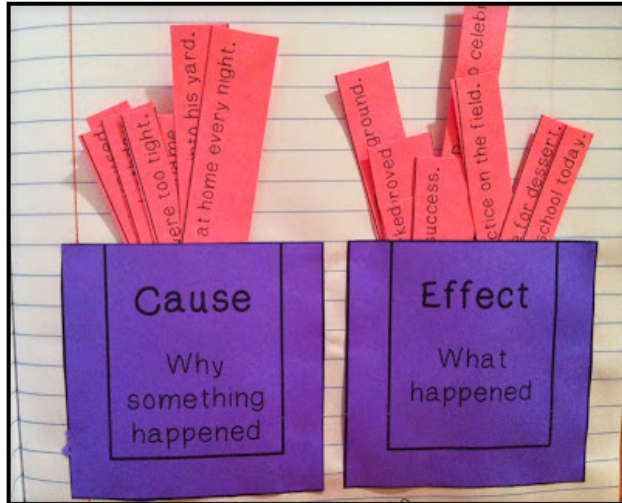
We used [this free worksheet](#) from Super Teacher Worksheets and another sheet where students were given the cause and had to come up with the effect. That one was challenging for some of my students!

On Wednesday the fun and breakthroughs really started! Half the class did a scavenger hunt in the hallway and the other half worked in the classroom with me in our interactive notebooks.

The [Cause and Effect Scavenger Hunt](#) was from Anna Fausnight on TPT and was so much fun!! My kiddos loved getting out of the classroom and wandering around the hallways! I put the cards up before they came upstairs on Wednesday morning and just the sight of the cards got everyone excited about class!

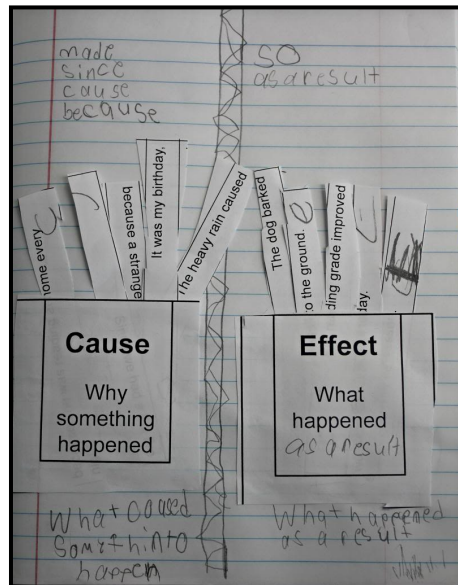


The kiddos inside made what we nicknamed fry boxes for our interactive notebooks.



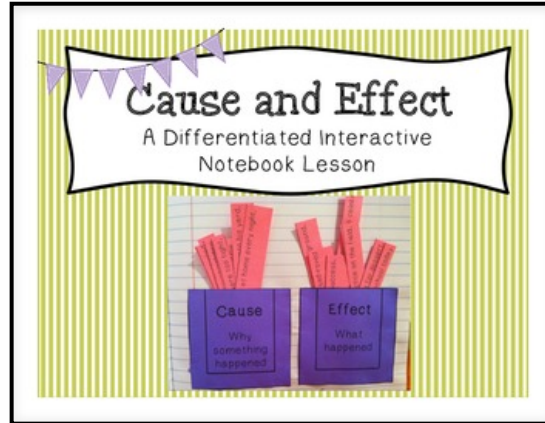
I teach 3 different ELA classes, each with a different ability level, so I created 3 different versions of this activity. All of my classes had a lot of success with it, too! Every time I use IN's I fall just a little more in love. Aren't they just great!?

After we got everything glued in our notebooks and the sentences sorted, I pulled them up on the Smarboard and we look at signal words for both cause and effect. We added the signal words above the fry boxes and some reminder questions below.



This is a picture of a notebook from the below level group and he did such a great job on it!! I really liked how he made the divider on the page!

If you'd like to win a copy of this activity just pin the image below and leave a comment with the link to your pin. I'll choose a winner on Monday evening!



I've also got everything in my [TPT store](#) 10% off through tomorrow and you can use the code FB100K for an extra 10% off!!

Anyone else think Cause and Effect is a difficult concept? What tricks do you use to help make it easier for your students?



You might also like:

Cause and Effect and a New Year Celebration Giveaway	Launching Reading Workshop in 4th Grade {Workshop Wednesday}	How to Choose a Just Right Book and Reading Survey {Monday ...

[Cause and Effect and a New Year Celebration Giveaway](#)

[Launching Reading Workshop in 4th Grade {Workshop Wednesday}](#)

[How to Choose a Just Right Book and Reading Survey {Monday ...](#)